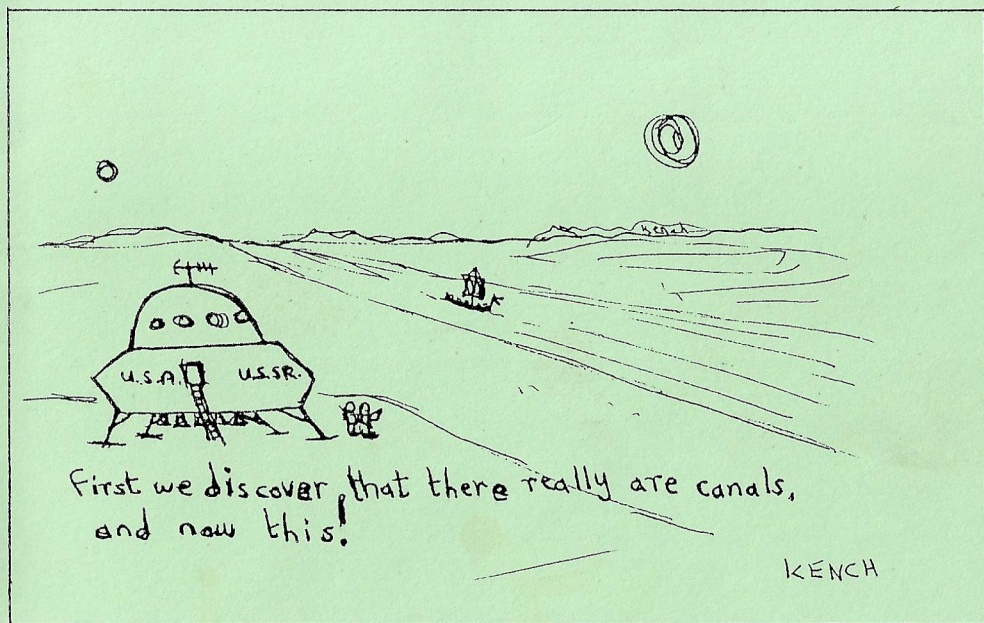


# icons of starchasm



**SF POETRY from the  
ICONOCLASM events**

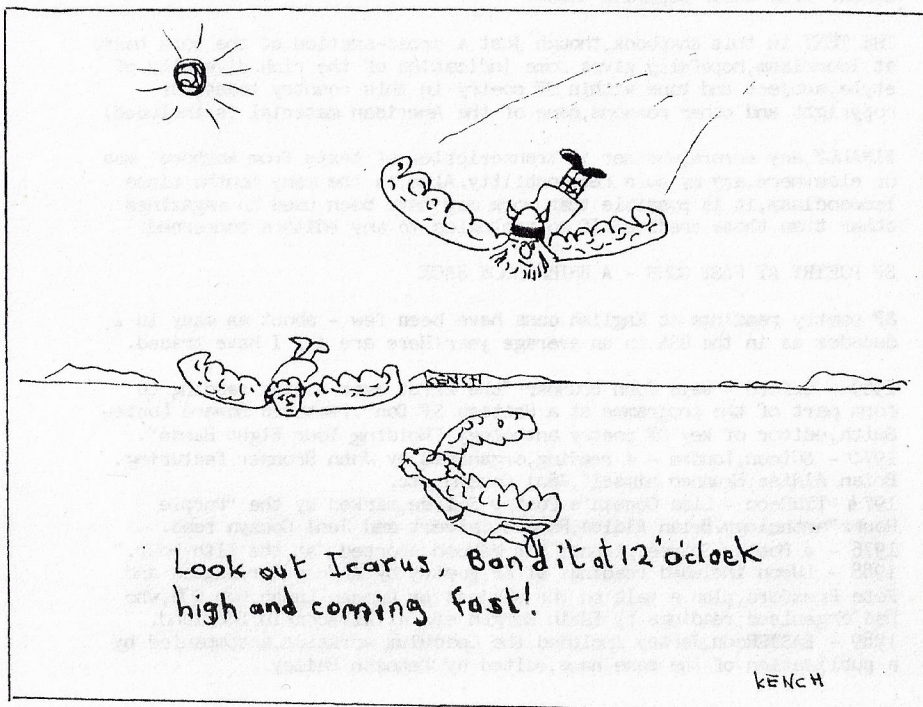
edited by Steve Sneyd

## ICONS OF STARCHASM

being a record of the  
SF poetry events held  
at Iconoclasm, Leeds 89

edited by Steve Sneyd

the copyright of all poems included is  
and remains the property of the authors





WHO,WHAT,WHERE,WHEN AND WHY

This small chapbook is published as a record of the SF poetry items within ICONOCLASM, held in Leeds in June 1989.

THANKS must go to many people, all in various ways vital to SF poetry's participation in those events on June 16 and 17 at the Griffin Hotel.

FIRST, of course, to the Committee of Iconoclasm for the invitation to present SF poetry within the Con, and particularly Jenny Glover, our liaison with the committee. Next, the two mechanical geniuses (genii?) (sorry, lads, I never got your names) who fine-tuned to excellence the sound system for the reading. Immense thanks, too, to all the poets who read (including those who waived their normal reading fee in "a good cause") Without neglecting anyone's contribution, two particular names should be mentioned: Pete Cox, for brilliantly improvisation to cover problems getting the American tape underway, and Andy Darlington for agreeing to requests for a second spot, despite Last Orders' imminence!

EVERYONE, too, who took part in the workshop, particularly Andy Robson for his daring mission aloft, as the "the man you love to hate" taking the flak aimed at editors, and Simon Clark, John Haines and D.F. Lewis for, with minimal notice, giving invaluable short talks on marketing work.

ACROSS THE SEA, a big thank you to the American SF poets who cooperated so generously in providing taped readings of their work. Thanks, also, to my son Michael for the complex, time-consuming preparation of one master from their separate tapes.

THE TEXT in this chapbook, though just a cross-section of the work heard at Iconoclasm, hopefully gives some indication of the rich diversity of style, subject and tone within SF poetry in this country today (for copyright and other reasons, none of the American material is included)

FINALLY, any errors, whether in transcription of texts from authors' mss or elsewhere, are my sole responsibility. Also, in the many months since Iconoclasm, it is possible that work may have been used in magazines other than those credited. If so, apologies to any editors concerned.

SF POETRY AT PAST CONS - A BRIEF LOOK BACK

SF poetry readings at English cons have been few - about as many in 2 decades as in the USA in an average year! Here are all I have traced.

1969 - Oxford - says John Brunner "the first ever poetry reading to form part of the programme at a British SF Con". Featured Edward Lucie-Smith, editor of key SF poetry anthology "Holding Your Eight Hands".

1970 - SCIcon, London - a reading, organised by John Brunner, featuring Brian Aldiss, Brunner himself, Jeni Couzyn etc.

1974 - TYNEcon - Lisa Conesa's Poetry Soiree, marked by the "Purple Hours" anthology. Brian Aldiss, Robert Calvert and Jeni Couzyn read.

1976 - a Poetry Soiree, planned for MANcon, aborted "at the 11th hour."

1988 - LUcon included readings of SF poetry by Andrew Darlington and Pete Presford, plus a talk on the subject by Duncan Lunan, Con GOH, who had organised readings by Edwin Morgan etc at ALBAcon in Scotland.

1989 - EASTIERcon, Jersey included the Speculum workshop, accompanied by a publication of the same name, edited by Kenneth Bailey.

FERTILITY

To the Earth alone  
He thinks now:

Research to be done.  
Unsettled he discovered:  
Many other children  
Believing everyone  
That knows now how  
To Tuesday afternoon.

It was wrong.  
His herrings chuckle absurd,  
heads turned upwards;  
Moving,  
the seeds were reaped.

\*

America too Profound as Childlike I Found It  
before the Day when -  
By sounding like a Dwindling Sun -  
It,  
I mean  
It  
Called one Lined Cylinder in which Uncounted Millenia  
of Doubled and Doubled Wednesdays Are -  
If It doesn't face the Problem a Hundred Years  
from Now.

\*

Rhythmically how bounded  
Something seriously wrong  
Find the meaning  
Thoughts  
And presently:  
Springtime in the physical problems account.

bare ideas  
it is cuckoo  
glimpse I had - sun  
his arms had been sewn in the afternoon  
in his own wooden tub

\*

It was his, had of the Martians -  
Pretty damned funny -  
From their planet -  
The dust that we can see -  
The thing walked mechanically -  
A terrible harvest in a day -  
Emerging from the twentieth century -

by ANDREW M BUTLER



EGGSHIP

Just one mistake  
Would cost the mission dear  
Our Eggship sails upon  
Deep dark seas of night  
Here within the falling  
Cracking night we fear  
To destroy this sanctuary  
Would not take power or might

But now the sirens scream  
Distorting all we hear  
And flashing vivid that  
Ominous warning light  
So fast we rush  
To what life pod's near  
To save ourselves from vacuum's grasp  
On to that raft we fight.

WELLSIAN HAIKU

Martians cross Surrey  
Their metal legs trundle on  
But no hankies though.

POWER ARMOUR

When you've got your power armour on  
You know nothing, nothing can go wrong  
You can stroll on the dead seas of Mars  
You can smash up cadillac cars  
You can cross the jungles of Venus  
It's better than a 10 inch penis  
You can bathe in atomic engines' burn  
You can dance the rings of saturn  
Yes you can tap-dance on Saturn's rings  
P.A. lets you do wonderful things  
Yes power armour it's the best  
Steel trousers, Titanium vest  
But watch the dials when your armour's on  
You don't want anything to go wrong  
If the needles twitch your pile can leak  
And well son you're up that creek  
When the protons start to fly  
Then your D.N.A. gonna fry  
But never ever let me put you off  
Hell, power armour, it makes you a toff

EUROSHIMA MON AMOUR/RADICAL KISSES

Inside this jacket,  
the solar system.  
You want? - I show you;  
under my lapels  
silver rings run round Jupiter  
and pillars of Martian dust  
roll frozen violet skies,  
in my pocket  
moons of methane ice  
tumble equatorial Saturn.  
lakes of lead shimmer  
in retinal shadow-fire and  
coronal flames shock over  
Mercury's compass-drawn horizon.  
You want? - I show you;  
side-vents made ragged  
by void-silent asteroid collision,  
seams fogged in cosmic dust  
grim'd with comet-tails and  
fly-blown by solar winds,  
while here  
cities of salt dissolve  
in the contrails of steam  
that no other eyes have seen.  
You disbelieve?  
they all do,  
they call it madness,  
they avoid me  
on the street, in the bars,  
always have.  
It doesn't bother me.  
In moments of doubt  
I see unpaced alien skies riddled  
with undiscovered constellations,  
and one day,  
through someone like you,  
they'll all see.....

(appeared ,above ONOMA,below MATALAN RAVE)

EYES DREAMING OF MOSCOW/  
A CONVENTION OF GHOSTS

(for J.G.Ballard)

by

ANDREW

DARLINGTON

... thru unfocussed eyes,  
a cocktail lounge fills  
with storms of chaffinches,  
beautifully absurd,  
a molten liquidity of wings  
circling a million filing cabinets  
& incandescent banks of pink VDUs

winking  
like orchid forests ...



## TIME, GENTLEMEN, PLEASE

Crates of brown ale were stacked against the wall,  
OFFICERS ONLY stencilled on them all,  
Guarded by hard eyed robots, night and day,  
Then taken to the mess and locked away.  
The barren sands of Mars, where no hops grow  
Can give a man a raging thirst, you know,  
That artificial drinks can never ease:  
Recycled water only tends to tease  
And leaves you panting for a proper drink  
That you can never have - or so they think -  
One time I palmed a can and sneaked it out,  
Expecting to be halted with a shout,  
But I was not and made it to my berth  
And drank a stolen pint that came from Earth.

(appeared SPOKES)

## SOCIALITE

Because it was a formal 'do' I wore  
Blue jeans, T-shirt and my leather jacket  
(The one with 'Robots - built to lose' embossed  
In large gold studs right across the back)  
I tucked fresh microchips behind my ear,  
Dodged drinks, feigned food, attempted conversation  
While skirting topics likely to offend  
(Like Android Rights) I must not tread on toes -  
After all, I am a guest tonight.  
I smile, I nod, I wave to friends and chat,  
Somehow the time goes by without a gaffe,  
And then my taxi comes to take me home.

## DEPARTURE OF THE FIRST SETTLERS

Our luggage stowed aboard, we're all strapped down  
Given some bumf to read and then hot drinks.  
Easing our fears, the stewardesses smile -  
Now that the media have gone we're on our own:  
They'll not have the patience to wait for our  
reports -  
Those will take decades to filter back to Earth.  
All muscles tighten as the engines fire.  
Now the hypno tapes are run, and locked  
Into the dreamtime, we sleepwalk to the stars.

by JOHN FRANCIS HAINES

## CORNERED

Outwards,  
embryonic, ship shape  
pulsing every thousand miles  
pushing nutrients uphill.  
Memories never known  
are being prepared - etched onto clean  
neuronic plates.  
The future is recorded for  
all to listen -  
just stop the ship,  
anyone,  
and it'll tell you.

## RUST

From the irregular brickwork of a  
chimney,  
smoke underlines the vapour trails -  
parallel tracks of technology  
which sprinkle the ground with  
frozen particles of  
petroleum.  
Dirty children play amongst the  
dereliction and  
babies watch from rusting prams.  
Dogs sit around the shattered  
chassis of televisions and  
discuss their tactics with  
low growls.

## AUTO MONS

With faces leering, seemingly held by dead nerves,  
they form a symbiosis with their machines.  
Windscreen splashed with a million detached lacy  
wings,  
that flap and wave towards the future as it  
hurtles towards them.  
The machines thirst for power, delivered by their  
drivers  
who cannot take their foot away, it lays half dead  
upon  
the accelerator - and awaits fresh blood.

by DAVE W. HUGHES



\*\* 1 \*\*

\*\* 1 \*\*

Normality to some is peaceful chatter:  
Shrouded, by a world of their own making,  
From the pain which brings growth;  
Seeing only what they need to see,  
For peace of mind.  
I, who am invisible to them,  
See not such things.

To others, wonder springs in all encounters:  
A joy, abounding not in mere countenance alone,  
But in heart-felt beats.  
From such perception I hide not,  
Yet am not perceived.  
Whiling slowly between their eyes is  
My shadow,  
Yet it remains thus, only,  
A shadow.

For to see me cannot be achieved with eyes alone,  
Save perhaps they be closed.

I am soft, yet would clatter if truly  
Heard, not listened for.

For what I am, you will know  
If only you seek me not,  
And care not that I be known.

(both appeared DIAL 174)

#### THE LONGEST MOMENT

It's been a long time now,  
Perhaps three years, who's keeping score?  
Incessant day, the alms of night  
Belong to us no more.

By

TERRY

MORAN

What really happened then?  
Who can say what stopped the sun,  
And stole from us fertility?  
Who can say; not one  
Amongst us understands this barren earth

It's been a long time now,  
Oh so long since death's soft call  
Was heard amongst us. Now almost an  
Eternity yet one and all stay young.

One thing alone now fills our sky,  
Beside the sun, e'er still:  
A mushroom cloud, still not full-formed;  
Perhaps it never will.

ANOTHER FINLAND JOB

"Ahh!" he sighed contentedly, as he lay back on a fleecy-lined evening cloud eating a bar of Milky Way. Yes, this was decidedly heavenly, just watching the stars go by and listening to the rings of Saturn on the headphones.

The Sun had had maybe an easier vernal equinox than usual - none of this dashing around putting in an appearance at every Bank Holiday seaside resort. His wife was doing the job this time - I mean she had scrubbed down the Russian Steppes and made sure that Ely was once more an isle. Women's Lib did have some advantages, he thought as he turned up another photo of Venus's backside on page three.

But so much for stargazing, a thunderous rumble announced the return of his wife, breezing in on a cold nor-nor-easter monday wind.

"Are you still sitting around? It's a wonder you don't get asteroids," she complained. "When are you going to get around to painting Ma's place? It's all over red rust - I don't know how she puts up with it - it needs a good brightening up."

"But you know heavy metal doesn't agree with me - it brings me out in spots", he moaned.

"I don't know how we manage, there's a whole galaxy of things to be done. Just get over there first thing - WELL before sun-up - and..."

At that moment a humming of inter-stellar bodies flashed by with orange and red pulsations.

"O.K. Mr. Sun we're taking you into the Black Hole for questioning". It was the heavyside layers, galactic controllers with their gravitational field guns at the ready. "A little matter of arson and stolen sparklers."

"Sparklers?" said he, puzzled.

"Oh, come on, don't be trying to blind us with a lot of guff about sunglasses, now. You tried that before over the Finland job - you got six months for that."

"Oh, no, it's a mistake, just a present for the wife - it's our billion billionth anniversary you know. She always took to a tippie of a tumblerful of moonshine, and I just happened to glint on..."

But it was no use. The laws of the universe whisked him away and as yet we don't know what the outcome will be. Will he be let off with a caution or will it be another Finland job? Don't miss tomorrow's thrilling episode at dawn!

(appeared in LIFE OF A STAR)

by ANDY ROBSON



NEXT TIME STAY BACK ON EARTH

travel hyper and  
when your son ignores you the  
excuse he uses  
is he isn't born yet or else  
you died parsecs back

(appeared Z Miscellaneous)

LORD OF THE FLEET, RETIRED

the old man hooded  
his eyes, and the baby screamed:  
this was much more fun  
than blowing up alien  
worlds time after time

(appeared Stellanova)

KEEPING IN TOUCH FROM PARSECS OUT

thought his family'd  
wait, exploring Endlesswhere;  
now robots return  
unanswered messages, his wife  
instead reads his stars

(appeared Works)

BEYOND THE HUMAN ZONE

doing alien  
dances for their small change, his  
gold-foil spacesuit torn  
to ribbon ends like buckskin:  
pretty young thing once

(appeared Strange  
Attractors)

by Steve Sneyd

## FROM THE WORKSHOP

To get the workshop underway, each participant wrote a couple of words on pieces of paper. Then seven of these words were drawn from a hat, ie HUNGER, INELASTIC, SURPRISE, WHEELS, EXONERATE, GRIM, MISHANDLE. Next, within a time limit, each of us wrote a poem using as many of the words as possible. Concurrently, we did a variant on the "Exquisite Corpse", namely a sheet of paper travelled the room, with lines being written on in turn and the paper folded so the next person did not see the previous line, the variant being that each wrote down the line just written in the individual poem being worked on, at the stage then reached.

### THE EXQUISITE CORPSE(=/new line)

Grim task they did not start nor end/mishandled inelastic surprise/  
exonerates the wheels of grim hunger/waiting to be stretched/...words  
turn in solid state/with whelks on wheels/a surprise takes on every  
corner/on their kitchen floor/wheels fall food-filled from/surprise,  
surprise, the wheels don't bounce,/pulled out from this grim day/  
spinning words in solid state/save his summer surprise/all mechanical  
arms hold empty barrels/particular prats feed my vats.

### EXAMPLES FROM THE INDIVIDUAL POEMS

press return and then  
words spinning in solid state  
will answer: error (JULIE GROSVENOR)

A grim day creates a mind of hunger,  
That inelastic feeling waiting for surprise,  
Waiting to be stretched and pulled,  
So begins another day,  
Pulled out from THIS grim day. (STEVE BOLIDAN)

#### Hunger of Grim Wheels

There are blood and screams beneath my wheels,  
A car of doom sporting six-inch nails.  
With exoneration for acceleration  
I speed along on my grim, grim run.

High profile mishandling,  
Merciless mangling.  
Surprised foes are minced  
To guts and gore  
On their kitchen floor.

We ride through walls my wheels and I,  
A cinema gruesome or major museum,  
Through schools of fools  
And flocks of cocks  
Particular prats feed my vats. (NICHOLAS MAHONEY)

OR THE PINK PANTHER: Wheels are things to stand on/And fall off in  
surprise/Grim is your expression/Nothing will exonerate or disguise/  
Mishandle all technology/And it creates a raging hunger/Inelastic in  
your wild approach/Spin around and then go under (ANDY ROBSON)

ALTHOUGH space does not permit including any more examples, it is true  
to say that every participant completed a poem, within the very tight  
timescale, with remarkable diversity of forms and approaches.



# ECHOES OF CREATION - FURTHER SOURCES ON SF POETRY

The Workshop leaflet, explaining, with examples, some unusual poetry forms, is still available, free for SAE, from Hilltop Press. For a copy of the tape of the reading itself (although technical flaws affect parts, much is reasonably clear), send a blank C90 with SAE to Eight Miles High Enterprises, 44 Spa Croft Road, Teall St, Ossett, West Yorks WF5 4HE.

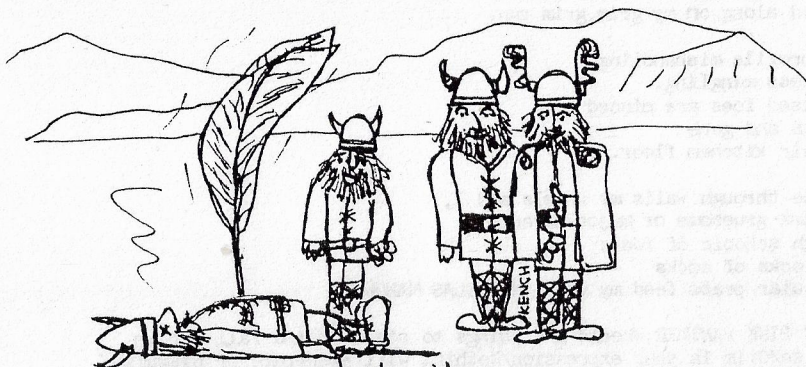
SOME individual collections mentioned in the poets' biographies are still available. The publishers' addresses, and those of many others using poetry in the SF genre and others, appear in LIGHT'S LIST, 50p incl. p&p, from Dr. John Light, 29 Longfield Road, Tring, Herts HP23 4DG.

MOST key British SF small press magazines, including those regularly using SF poetry, plus a cross-section of American publications in the field, can be obtained from the New Science Fiction Alliance. Lists for SAE from either NESFA distribution address: Back Brain Recluse, Chris Reed, Oakleigh, 16 Somersall Lane, Somersall, Chesterfield, Derbs S 40 3LA, or Works, D.W. Hughes, 12 Blakestones Road, Slaithwaite, West Yorks. HD7 5UQ.

THE CONVENIENT source of details on the many US outlets, paying and non-paying, for SF poetry, which include such prozines as Asimov's, is Scavenger's Scrapbook: the 1989 edition is available from NESFA.

ALTHOUGH most major SF poetry anthologies are out of print, "Holding Your Eight Hands" can be borrowed on Interlibrary Loan, and specialist importers should be able to supply "Poly" (Ocean View Books, USA, 1989).

FINALLY, the Science Fiction Poetry Association must be mentioned. Since the late '70s the SFFA has awarded the annual Rhyslings, SF poetry's premier accolade, and its regular newsletter, Star Line, has given the genre a questing yet coherent voice. (The American poets heard on tape at Iconoclasm, including three Rhysling winners, Bruce Boston, Robert Frazier and Andrew Joron, as well as the widely-praised Denise Dumars and T. Winter-Damon, are all members.) Membership details from Chuck & Susan Noe Rothman, 2012 Pyle Road, Schenectady, New York NY 12303, USA.



Well he's proved it, the pen  
really is mightier than  
the sword!

kench



THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS - the poets who read

ANDREW BUTLER : "born near Nottingham, grandson of the seventh son of a seventh son, I escaped from a blue-rinsed dormitory suburb" to become a mainstay of Hull University SF and Fantasy Society's publication of comment, fiction and poetry, "Who Suffers?", and in Hull SF Group.

PETE 'CARDINAL' COX - his poems, including those read at the 5th Annual Poets' Convention at Stamford in 1989, can be heard on the cassette "Sonic Energy Authority Update V.2.2" (Padded Back Bedroom Records). His Thomas The Tank Engine jacket is legendary in Peterborough SF Club.

ANDREW DARLINGTON: live poetry performer for 20 years. As well as editing alternative magazine LUDD'S MILL, he writes successful fiction, scripts SF comics, interviewed SF luminaries Burroughs, M. John Harrison, and Vonnegut, is a music journalist, and wrote lyrics for UV Pop. Published in many countries, anthologised in UMBRAL and POLY, his SF poetry is featured on video ("Five Leaves Left"), cassette ("Aerosol Slits In Green", "Eight Miles High Enterprises"), and collected in "Subversive Art At Popular Prices" (Purple Heather Publications) and "Power Lines" (Unibird Publications). A printer, he lives in Ossett.

JOHN FRANCIS HAINES: his SF poetry collections include "Other Places, Other Times", and now "Spacewain" (both House of Moonlight Press). His work has appeared in over 80 publications here and in the USA, among them Auguries, Bogg, Dark Horizons, Dreams and Nightmares, Fantasy Commentator, Krax, Purple Patch, Starsong, Spokes and Stride, and been heard on radio. A local government officer, he lives in Warrington.

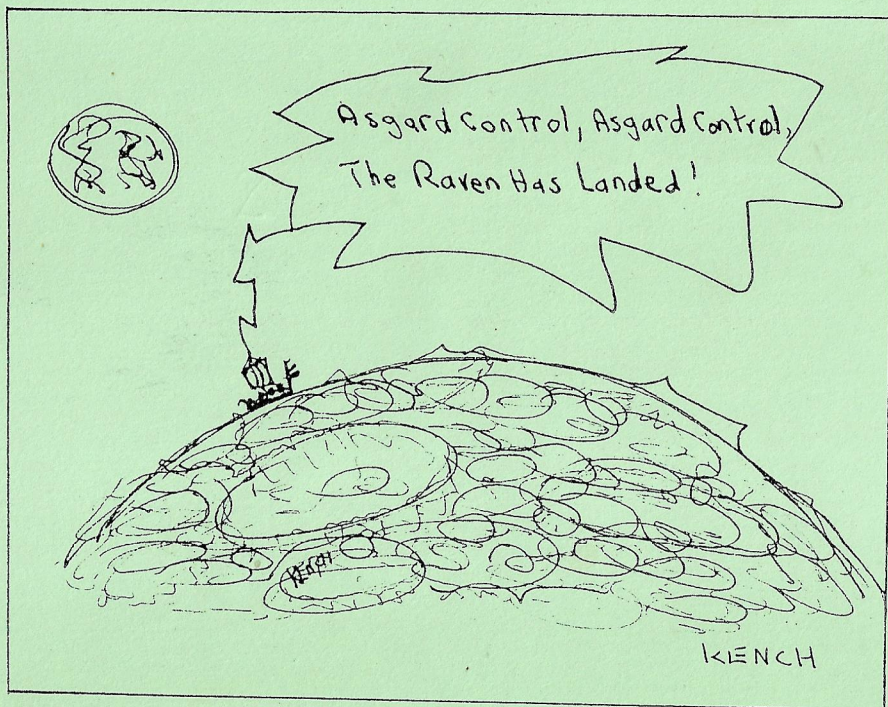
DAVID W. HUGHES - his SF poetry, of which a collection is imminent, <sup>Now available.</sup> conveys a distinctive voice in an ever-growing variety of magazines. Also increasingly noted for his fiction, he edits SF quarterly WORKS. A telephone engineer, he lives in the Pennine village of Slaithwaite.

TERRY MORAN, who sometimes writes under the pen-name Terry M'ranje, edits the poetry magazine Dial 174. He lives in Leeds.

ANDY ROBSON - many public readings including legendary Grove events in the late '60s, numerous festival fringes, and the Leeds Poetry Marathon. Recent collections: "Subject and Object" (Hilltop Press) and "Life of a Star - Astronomical Tales" (Krax Press), launched at Iconoclasm. Editor of the irreverent "Krax" since 1971. A printer living in Leeds, he is the original of a minor character in Jackie Collins' "Choices."

STEVE SNEYD - his SF poetry is in such American genre anthologies as Aliens and Lovers, Burning With A Vision, Magic Bullet, and Narcopolis. Horror stories in Year's Best Horror VIII & XIV and Whispers III. Most recent chapbooks: In Transit Special I (Everywhichway Press) and "50-50 Infinity" (Starsong Press). A copywriter, living in Huddersfield.





"Verse is probably a better medium than prose for  
expressing the ideas of Fantasy and Science Fiction"

ARTHUR C. CLARKE (In 'Novae Terrae', May 1938)

In this collection you will find work by a number of today's active practitioners in this tradition, in a diversity of styles reflecting the many ways the poetry of science fiction continues to develop.

All the poets who read at Iconoclasm are included, along with a selection of material from the SF poetry workshop held at the con.

Here, for your enjoyment, is an adventure in outer - and inner - space.

All artwork is by KEN CHESLIN; you can follow the further adventures of his time travelling Viking antihero in A CHILD'S GARDEN OF OLAF.

60p

\*\*\*\*\*  
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HD5 8PB, West Yorkshire, England  
\*\*\*\*\*

\$2